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A Quick Summary of Volume II: History of Christianity in Asia

"A History of Christianity in Asia, Vol 2. 1500 to 1900." 400 years of the largest continent in the world!? 800 pages. Are you sure you want to go through with this?

Well, first the context. Why and how did I write it?. I didn't want to be a historian. I wanted to be a professor of classical Greek, not history. My mother was a classicist. She started me on Latin when I was 6 and Greek at 7. But in college I ran into a detour, my older brother. He was a home missionary in North Dakota. He called me up when I was just a sophomore. "I've been asked by the Foreign Mission Board to go to India", he said, "and I want you to take my church for the summer." I said, "Charlie, I don't graduate for two more years, I've never been to seminary, and I've never preached a sermon." "Just for the summer", he said. He was my older brother and growing up in the Orient you listen to an older brother, so I went. I went, and three months later when I left those dear people to go back to college, I began to realize that I had to be a minister, a pastor. Classical Greek gradually gave way to the koine (common) Greek of the New Testament.

At Seminary, though, I ran into another detour. Dr. Robert E. Speer spoke at chapel. He was not only the Chairman of the Board of Princeton Seminary; he was the Senior Secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, and he didn't give us a lecture--he preached. Oh, how he preached. Just before he was about to finish he paused and reached into his vest and pulled out a watch. I thought he was checking to see whether it was time to stop. But no, he paused, held up the watch and looked at us a moment. Then he leaned over the pulpit and said, "Young men, this watch could tick for nine and a half years without numbering the people in China who have never heard of the Lord Jesus Christ." I have never forgotten it. "9 and a half years". I had to be a missionary, not a pastor.

And I was: for four years in China--two of them under the nationalists, then the revolution, and two more years under the communists until they gave me a people's trial and threw me out. I taught here in Princeton for two years in the 1950s, missions and

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ecumenics for Dr. Mackay, and then the Korean church asked me to come back home to Korea. But not to teach Greek. They wanted me at the seminary founded by my father in Pyongyang, which was now re-opening as a refugee institution in Seoul. Among other things I began to teach Church History. And that is the beginning of the story as to how I began to find an unmet need for a History of Christianity in Asia. Why did I choose Asia? Here I was, teaching Church History in Asia and all the books we had on Church History were limited to Western Church History. Now, it's important, of course, for Asian students to study western church history, but it began to bother me more and more that they were learning nothing at all about their own Asian history. So, I began to study more and more and teach more and more Asian Church History.

But I think what you want me to do here is to give you a quick look at Volume II of that history. Christianity in Asia, 1500-1900. .

Let me begin with the observation that all the great religions of the world were born in Asia. Buddha was born in Asia...; Confucius...; Hinduism...; Muhammad...; And Jesus Christ... but statistically Asia is the least Christian continent in the world.

In 2000, statistics call North America 84% Christian (??); Europe 76%; Latin America 77%; Africa 45%; and Asia 8%. Why? After 400 years of modern Christian missions in Asia, have we failed?

I will try to shape my answer that question by summarizing my perspective on those 400 years around the introduction and the last chapter epilogue of this second volume. It is something like looking back at the four centuries from a 19th century perspective, and perhaps taking a peek now and then into the 20th century..

Why emphasize the 19th century? Well, it sort of sums up what had happened in Asia in the three hundred years before. Professor Latourette, my mentor at Yale, wrote a seven-volume masterpiece on a History of the Expansion of Christianity. Three volumes of it are on the 19th century (the 1800s) which he calls the "great century" of Christian world missions. But I found that in Asia the 19th century was anything but great for Christian missions. It began with Catholics still staggering

from the dismantling of the greatest missionary society they had ever had, the Jesuits. It began with Dutch Protestants relentlessly pursuing trade in Asia but neglecting their missions. It began with British Protestants in India driving the first Protestant missionary to India, William Carey, out of Calcutta. In 1800 there was not a single resident Protestant missionary either in China or Japan. In Asia, the so-called "great century" of missions looked more like an attempt to recover from setbacks or failed and shaky starts than as a great triumphal parade.

Even worse, the 19th century has been called the great century of colonialism, not Christian mission--the final years of centuries of violent intrusion by unwanted strangers riding roughly over ancient civilizations. By 1900 most of Asia had concluded that Christian missions and western colonialism were inseparable.

But I found that in the primary sources--the actual mission records, the written histories, the letters--a very different picture emerged. There was plenty to criticize, much to apologize for, and some thing that simply horrified in the way the west rolled in. But Christian mission as the sources reveal it, was rarely, if ever, the monster in the intrusion. And imperial colonialism was more of a prickly companion of mission--sometimes helpful, sometimes hostile, but not the inseparable ally of the mission as it is so often pictured. The encounter of Christianity with Asia in those 400 years was like a tidal wave, a tsunami, crashing on the coasts of Asia. There is death in that wave. But seawater carries salt, and when the waters of death recede the salt remains--and salt brings savor to the food of life. The Bible says, "You are the salt of the earth." (Matt. 5:13). And we must ask again, more carefully, "How great and in what ways might the 19th century have been a "great century" in Asian church history?"

I'll compress my conclusions to seven sweeping, and therefore thoroughly debatable generalizations, which you are welcome to challenge:

1. If the measure of growth is the number of Christian adherents added to the churches, the 19th century was an astounding missionary success.

2. The 19th century was predominantly a Protestant century, the golden century of Protestant missions.

3. Protestant missions focussed on evangelism and scripture; Catholics on the church.

4. It was a century that opened mission to women and women's rights.

5. Its characteristic missional structure was the voluntary society, both for Catholics and Protestants.

6. Never count the Catholics out of any century! They still outnumber Protestants and Orthodox combined in Asia.

7. Its crowning achievement was the planting of rising Asian Christianity for Asian churches in Asia, the continent which holds more than half the people in the world.

I. Church Growth as Missionary Success

Never had any religion expanded so globally as Christianity between 1500 and 1900. Muslims grew, but not globally. It was not Islam but Christianity which, in the 19th century, became the first truly global religion.

Even in Asia, Islam in 1900 was not the largest religion. It ranked third. Chinese Confucianism in East Asia, and Hindus in South Asia--both outnumbered Islam. It was mostly only in West Asia (the "Middle East"), with a few exceptions, that Islam was dominant. But in Asia as a whole, Christianity was a poor sixth numerically, as this chart of the year 1900 shows.¹ Asia's population then was 956m.

China folk-rel./Confucian	379,000,000
Hindus	202,000,000
Muslims	156,000,000
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Christian	22,000,000

¹ David Barrett, World Christian Encyclopedia, 2001, vol. 1, p.3. The figures are for total membership and "marginal Christians", and should be read as including a large margin of error. But that is true of most religious statistics.

But there is an important piece of good news for Christians in those statistics. During that century, 1800 to 1900, the number of Christians in proportion to Asia's total population apparently grew faster than that of any other religion in Asia. Figures for 1800 are shaky but Christians shot up from only about 1 million in 1800 to 22 million in 1900. But remember, before we boast, that Christianity started in 1800 with a much lower numerical start, very important in measuring growth mathematically.

II. Protestant Advance

It was a Protestant century. Catholics outnumbered them but were, until the 1830s, still recovering from a long, severe period of decline.² Asia's Protestants missionaries, on the other hand, were marching to claim the world-- exuberant, triumphal, often arrogant. This quotation from a prominent Protestant writing in the 1895 Missionary Review of the World will make you wince. The author wrote: "The Anglo-Saxon is the supreme colonizer, and civilizer, and Christianizer under the sun."³

But it would be a mistake to accept that as characteristic of most missionaries. Their letters are filled with love and praise of the converts. Their doctors were loved; the missionary hospitals filled to overflowing. The women especially clustered around the foreign women, first with curiosity, then with increasing interest, then admiration and some envy, but finally with eager, overwhelming love. Students preferred mission schools to their old Confucian teachers.

Beginning in the 1880's the Student Volunteer Movement burst across America's college campuses, and thousands volunteered for

² From 1880 to 1885, for example, Protestants were increasing three times as fast as Catholics in east and south Asia. Handbook of Foreign Missions, 1888, 331. A helpful book on the problems of academic research and fair reporting of the Protestant missionary movement is Missionary Encounters: Sources and Issues, ed. by Robert A. Bickers and Rosemary Seton. (Richmond, England: Curzon Press, 1996).

³ Delavan I Leonard, A Hundred Years of Missions, (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1895, 131f.

overseas service. Missionaries became almost as popular on the campus as athletes. At Mt. Holyoke, the Principal, Mary Lyon, whose image is still on our U.S. 2-cent stamp, encouraged all her women students to consider becoming missionaries. In one of the newsletters of the time, there appeared a notice that "no young lady should be seen walking on the campus with a young man unless he be a minister or a returned missionary."

The numbers in Asia were still with the Catholics and the Orthodox, but momentum was with the Protestants.⁴ And they did not stop growing in 1900.

Associated with this remarkable increase of new Protestant converts abroad--from about 1 million to 22 million in one century--Protestants discovered a new brand of heroes and heroines. Foreign missionaries. The 19th century was the first century in which Protestants (with the brave exceptions of little Holland and the Danes and Moravians) ventured away from their comfortable homes in the "Christian" west to meet the challenge of a world still largely unreached. For nearly 300 years since the Reformation, Protestant strength had been consumed by the struggle to survive in Europe after the break from the Roman Church.

It was an unlikely prophet who snapped them awake and galvanized them to go out, as their Bible plainly commanded--go out and proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord "to the ends of the earth". William Carey was a full-time shoemaker, a part-time Baptist preacher, and a man with an illiterate wife. She signed the wedding register with an X. But as the 18th century was on the verge of changing into the 19th century--from 1792 to his death he so changed the face of modern missions that he is almost over-venerated. But he deserves it. He deserved it because he wrote a book, and preached a sermon, and organized a mission and then, instead of staying home to become the president of the mission

⁴ Catholics were 11. million (1.2% of Asia's population; Orthodox were 6.8 million (0.7%), and Protestants 4.5 million (0.5%). Barrett, World Christian Encyclopedia, 2001). The Armenian Orthodox were 1.4 million, but were struggling to survive increasingly genocidal persecution.

society, he went himself as a missionar to India. All this in about one year, and at a time when complacent western Christians (like Ursinus, a Lutheran) were saying, "Why send a mission to heathen savages that have nothing human about them but the shape of their bodies"?

Carey's book told "Christendom Christians" that God created us all human beings in His image, and sent his Son to tell the he loves us, we here in the west are keeping the good news to our one fourth of the world, while three fourths have never heard it. The sermon said, it's time to to go, as he said "to the ends of the earth". stretch out in faith and go. But it was the little Baptist mission he organized and led himself to India that the world church will always remember.

For Americans, the most popular missionary heroes in Asia were: In India, Carey, of course, and Henry Martyn who is remembered for his passionate prayer, "Let me burn out for my Lord". And two from China--Robert Morrison, the first Protestant missionary there, who, when asked, "Do you think that you can convert the Chinese Empire?", replied, "No, but God can". And then went out and translated the Bible into the first Chinese version. That was all God needed. ^{The Bible in Chinese} There are more Chinese Christians today than Christians of any other Asian nation.. Hudson Taylor, whose pioneering China Inland Mission took the forbidden interior of China as its field, ~~led it~~ to become one of the largest Protestant missions in the world. In Burma, ^{it was} Adoniram Judson, missionary to Burma, is one of my favorites for his answer to a man who asked if there was any hope for the Burma mission after his torture in a Burmese prison, the loss of his wife, and the destruction of the whole mission in the Anglo-Burmese War. He straightened up, looked at the man and said, "The future is as bright as all the promises of God." That statement became a key motif for my whole History of Christianity in Asia.

III. The 19th Century was a Century of Women in Mission.

It is typical of the early 19th century that most of its heroes were men. What about the heroines? Well, they were not even called

missionaries until after the middle of the century.⁵ A bit of early doggerel, author unknown, exaggerated the injustice, but is true enough to hurt:

"In the field of Christian missions
In this bivouac of life,
You will find the Christian soldier
Represented by his wife."

But though it took all of its hundred years, the 19th century was the century that for most Protestants opened the door to women in mission.

For most denominations the goal was not achieved in the "great century", the 19th. By 1900, however, women were a Protestant missionary majority world-wide. The openings came in stages: 1820, the Anglican Church Missionary Society^{the CMA} recognized women as "assistant missionaries" (that^{CMA} is the evangelical society, not the high church Anglican Society for the Propagation of the Gospel); 1822, another wall was breached--Betsy Stockton, of Princeton, became the first single-woman missionary sent out from North America, ^{and she was an Afro American} She went to Hawaii under the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) and she was an African-American. Her portrait hangs in the reading room of Speer library.

By 1900 it had become obvious: there were more women missionaries in Protestant foreign missions than men. Pierce Beaver, one of the best of mission historians, describes 19th century missions as "the First Feminist Movement in North America"⁶ By 1900 in American missions, women were a Protestant missionary majority world-

⁵ David Abeel, "Female Agency Among the Heathen...", (London: Edward Suter, 1850), 261-265, as cited by Beaver, American Protestant Women..., 89-91.

⁶ Pierce Beaver, American Protestant Women in World Mission, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968)

wide, outnumbering men by 6,772 to 6,259.⁷ And long before they were given the vote in their missions, their male colleagues were discovering the fact that Christian mission is only half effective without the help of women. They could do what men could never do in Asian cultures. They could work directly, women to women--in hospitals, schools, and the private homes of societies and nations not yet ready for gender equality. One of the first missionary doctors in Korea was required to take the pulses of his women patients through the closed doors of the women's quarters.

And there were early missionary heroines. Ann Judson, the wife of Adoniram Judson of Burma was as much a hero as her husband. She was for a while the only white woman in a country of eight million people when her husband was seized, beaten and thrown into the death prison. Her courage and loyalty through the ordeal is one of the finest examples of bravery under pressure in missionary history.⁸ Two more whose names became household words in America were "Dr. Ida" Scudder, an American Congregationalist in India, and Lottie Moon of China, a Southern Baptist. As for single women missionaries, it was Hudson Taylor's voluntary, independent China Inland Mission which was one of the earliest to receive and appoint single women to positions hitherto excluded to any but men.⁹ Our seminary president's grandmother was one of them.

IV. The 19th Century Priority in Mission was Evangelism.

It was a century of evangelism--evangelism, and Bible study, and revivals. The roots were in its theology--with a message ^{inherited} from earlier Great Awakenings under Jonathan Edwards in America and John Wesley in Ireland, revived and refired by Dwight L. Moody. It built on two basic convictions: first, the authority for a world Christian mission ^{was} is Christ and Scripture; and second, its focus should be on evangelizing, not civilizing

⁷ New York: Ecumenical Mission Conference, 2:424.

⁸ Ethel Daniels Hubbard, Ann of Ava.

⁹ A. T. Pierson, The Modern Mission Century, (New York: Baker & Taylor, 1901), 191-193.

any and all who had not yet heard the message - the good news of the Gospel. Proclaim, Gather converts, Instruct them in the Scriptures, Baptize and then Organize the Church.

Alexander Duff of India, though he is remembered more as ^{an educator} ~~the~~ great Scottish missionary educator, kept his priorities straight when he said to the Church of Scotland, which elected him Moderator, "The church that is no longer evangelistic will soon cease to be evangelical".¹⁰ But it was German Pietists beginning in India in 1708 (and the Moravians even earlier), who led the way. Then the British with Carey in 1792, and eventually, America in 1811.

It was this emphasis on evangelism that irritated Western colonialists and saved the missionaries from some of the temptations of too close an association with nationalistic western imperialism. To rescue the "heathen" from everlasting loss was a matter of life and death, an urgent responsibility. Leaders at the highest levels of American colleges agreed--Timothy Dwight of Yale, and Francis Wayland of Brown. Wayland wrote in the 1850s:

"The Son of God has left us with no directions for civilizing the heathen, and then Christianizing them. We are not commanded to teach schools in order to undermine paganism, and then on its ruins, to build up Christianity".¹¹

19th century missionaries did build schools, and heal the sick, and rescue slaves, and feed the poor, and champion women's rights, but that is not why they went to the ends of the earth. They went as they so often said, "to tell the world about the Lord Jesus Christ."

V. The 19th Century Voluntary Society.

¹⁰ Ecumenical Missionary Conference, NY, 1900, 2:329. Duff was thus quoted there by A. T. Pierson, editor of The Missionary Review.

¹¹ Francis Wayland, The Apostolic Ministry, (Rochester: Sage and Brother, 1853), 19

The characteristic mission of the 19th century was a voluntary society, not a denominational church society. It began as a movement of pietists and independents on the mainstream margins. Not even William Carey was able to bring all his fellow Baptists into mission. The church's support of his "Particular Baptist" Mission Society soon dried up, and the "church society" became a "voluntary society", and Carey was forced into complete independence.¹² What started as a "Particular Baptist" movement, a "church society", became a "voluntary society", independent. For Catholic missions this somewhat paralleled the long standing difference between the freedom granted to missionary orders like the Franciscans and Jesuits (a voluntary), and a papal society under direct church control.

In Protestant missions, the first voluntary mission in Britain was the famous London Missionary Society (1759); and in America the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (1810 (an independent combination of Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Dutch Reformed and Baptists).

VI. Roman Catholic Missions.

Never count the Catholics out! After the French Revolution, 1783, Catholic missions were described by one Catholic as "pitiful ruins and relics". But in 1830 a vigorous recovery revitalized Catholicism. At one point they had dropped to only 300 priests overseas. By 1900 it was estimated that there were ^{27,000} 12,000 ordained foreign priests and 500 lay Brothers, together with an additional 10,000 "indigenous Sisters". The overall total was startling--60,000 Catholic missionaries if the western European Sisters on the field were added. In one century, the 19th, the same report estimated that the total number of New Catholic Christians in the mission fields (which included England, Scotland, Holland and the United States!) had climbed 5 million to 25 million. There had been

¹² See above chapter 12. And on the difference between a society (a modality)", and a "voluntary" society, see Ralph D. Winter and R. Pierce Beaver, The Warp and the Woof: Organizing for Mission, (Pasadena, CA: Wm Carey Library, 1970). The Catholic equivalent would be a papal mission (modality), and a missionary order, like the Jesuits (sodality, voluntary).

nothing like it since the time of the apostles, the author exclaimed.¹³¹⁴

But that was misspelled.
 The pace was slower with the growth of Catholics *China examples* in Asia. (See above chap. 12). At the end of the 19th century, Catholics (measured by numbers of adherents) still outweighed the Protestants almost three to one--about 22 million Catholics, to 4.5 million Protestants. Using the two most historically strategic centers of the continent as examples (India and its neighbors and China) the Catholics numbered in India 1,300,000 (in 1886); Protestants 710,000; in China, Catholics were 480,000, Protestants 150,000.¹⁵

Back By 2000 the situation in Asia had completely reversed. The continent is now 2 to 1 Asian Protestant (200 million Protestant and 100 million Asian Roman Catholic.¹⁶ For Protestants "the great century" in Asia may have *been* been the 20th.

Now I want to finish work
 So I finished Volume two with a short look ahead.

VII. The 19th Century in Asia was most significant as a Preparation for Two More Centuries of Advance and Struggle toward a truly Asian Christianity..

About midway in the 19th century, the Christian critic and philosopher, Kierkegaard, warned the Danish church, "One must think backward to live forward". This volume has been thinking backward for 400 years, and Eileen tells me, "Sam, when are you ever going to get to the land of the living." Perhaps this final optimistic generalization will be the key to opening the door of hope for the future of the Church in Asia.

19th century missions were led by foreign missionaries.

¹³L. E. Louvet, Les Missions Catholiques au XIXme Siecle, 412ff.

¹⁴ Handbook of Foreign Missions 1888, pp. 327-338, 341.

¹⁵ Protestant figures from 1888 Handbook; Catholic from L. E. Louvet, Missions Catholiques, XIX Siecle, as above.

¹⁶ Barrett, World Christian Encyclopedia, 2001, vol. 1, p. 13.

As the century began to close the missionaries came to grips with the consequences of an obvious fact: there could be no Asian church without native Asian leaders. If so, there must inevitably be a wrenching shift in the role of the foreign missionary. Princeton's Robert E. Speer put it this way: the missions are the ladder for building the church, but there comes a time to take away the ladder and let the people in. The 19th century was the missional ladder that built a 20th century Church.

Sometimes, in China for example, that time was slow in coming. Perhaps too late to beat a Boxer revolt in 1900, a world war in 1914, and a communist revolution in 1949.

But that's the trouble with writing a history. You have to look at your watch or your publisher, and stop. And history doesn't stop. A few years before the new 19th century rolled in, British imperialists drove Carey out of Calcutta, but history didn't stop. And when 19th century Koreans tried to stone my father out of Korea--six times in one year--history didn't stop. And it didn't stop in China with the Boxer Rebellion.

But the Baptists are one of the largest denominations in India today. And in China, the memory of the martyrs China killed in that Boxer uprising so moved college students in America and Britain that in the next 30 years some 25,000 of them poured themselves out around the world in the Student Volunteers for Mission Movement, to take the place of the those killed. And history didn't stop in Korea. My father came back six times to the same northern city which had stoned him, and stayed for another 46 years to see a mass movement to Christ in the north, and build Korea's first Protestant seminary, and be elected first moderator of an independent Korean Presbyterian Church that now has more members than the Presbyterian churches of America.

Yes, missionaries make mistakes, and bad things happen in Christian history. But history just doesn't stop Christians. I remember Professor Roland Bainton at Yale. Someone asked him, "How can you know so much church history and still be a Christian?" I don't know how he answered, but the answer for me is, "Because I don't follow

Christians, I follow Christ". This is Lent, isn't it. Six more of the sad, bad days of Lent. But Lent always ends with an Easter. So trust Christ. He is still alive. And have a happy Easter. Thank you.

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7. Its crowning achievement was the planting of rising Asian Christianity for Asian churches in Asia, the continent which holds more than half the people in the world.

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Christian	22,000,000

¹ David Barrett, World Christian Encyclopedia, 2001, vol. 1, p.3. The figures are for total membership and "marginal Christians", and should be read as including a large margin of error. But that is true of most religious statistics.

statistics. During that century 1800 to 1900 the Christian proportion of the population seems to have grown faster than any other religion in Asia. Figures for 1800 are shaky but Christians shot up from only about 1 million in 1800 to 22 million in 1900. But remember, before we boast, that it had a much lower numerical start, very important in measuring mathematical growth.

II. Protestant Advance

It was a Protestant century. Catholics outnumbered them but by 1900 the Protestants were increasing far faster than the Catholics who were, until the 1830s, still recovering from a long, severe period of decline and depression.²

Protestants, on the other hand, were marching to claim the world--exuberant, triumphal, often arrogant. This quotation from a prominent Protestant writing in the 1895 Missionary Review of the World will make you wince. The author wrote: "The Anglo-Saxon is the supreme colonizer, and civilizer, and Christianizer under the sun."³ But that was not a characteristic attitude of the Protestant missionary enterprise in the nineteenth century.

Beginning in the 1880's the Student Volunteer Movement burst across college campuses, and Christian students volunteered for overseas service by the thousands. Missionaries became almost as popular on the campus as athletes. At Mt. Holyoke, the Principal, Mary Lyon, whose image is still on our U.S. 2-cent stamp, encouraged all her women students to consider becoming missionaries. In one of the newsletters of the time, there appeared a notice that "no young lady

² From 1880 to 1885, for example, Protestants were increasing three times as fast as Catholics in east and south Asia. Handbook of Foreign Missions, 1888, 331. A helpful book on the problems of academic research and fair reporting of the Protestant missionary movement is Missionary Encounters: Sources and Issues, ed. by Robert A. Bickers and Rosemary Seton. (Richmond, England: Curzon Press, 1996).

³ Delavan I Leonard, A Hundred Years of Missions, (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1895, 131f.

should be seen walking on the campus with a young man unless he be a minister or a returned missionary."

The numbers in Asia were still with the Catholics and the Orthodox, but momentum was with the Protestants.⁴ And they did not stop growing in 1900.

Associated with this remarkable increase of new Protestant converts abroad--from about 1 million to 22 million in one century--Protestants discovered a new brand of heroes and heroines. Foreign missionaries. The 19th century was the first century in which Protestants (with the brave exceptions of little Holland and the Danes and Moravians) ventured away from their comfortable homes in the "Christian" west to meet the challenge of a world still largely unreached. For nearly 300 years since the Reformation, Protestant strength had been consumed by the struggle to survive in Europe after the break from the Roman Church.

It was an unlikely prophet who snapped them awake and galvanized them to go out, as their Bible plainly commands--go out and proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord "to the ends of the earth". William Carey was a full-time shoemaker, a part-time Baptist preacher, and a man with an illiterate wife. She signed the wedding register with an X. But just as the 18th century was on the verge of changing into the 19th century--from 1792 to his death he so changed the face of modern missions that he is almost over-venerated. But he deserves it. He ^{He deserves it} ~~became the first hero~~ by writing a book (its name alone fills a whole page, but I will simply call it "An Inquiry.." and preaching a sermon, and organizing a mission, and going to India all

^{in about 10 years}
^{To these days} There were some complacent western Christians like the Lutheran (Ursinus) who had said "Why send a mission to heathen savages that have nothing human about them but the shape of their bodies"? But then Ursinus ^{from many} preached a sermon that proclaimed that God loves

⁴ Catholics were 11. million (1.2% of Asia's population; Orthodox were 6.8 million (0.7%), and Protestants 4.5 million (0.5%). Barrett, World Christian Encyclopedia, 2001). The Armenian Orthodox were 1.4 million, but were struggling to survive increasingly genocidal persecution.

history's answer was "No". In fact, in 1949, "the number of Christians [had] never reached more than 1% of the population".¹⁶ The "golden age" of Christianity is gone, and looking like just another failure.

I found that out the hard way in the revolution. My timing could not have been worse. 1947 was not a good year for going to China as a missionary. The country was breaking up in civil war--Chiang Kai-Shek's nationalists against Mao Tze-Tung's communists. When I asked, "Who will win?", expecting the answer, "The Christian general", to my surprise even some of my Christian friends said, "The communists," and they were right. Within a year and a half the communists captured the university where I was teaching, and went on to take the rest of the country.

In Nanking, early in 1950--I had left Peking to teach at Nanking Seminary--Dr. Wu Yi-Fang of Ginling College whom I mentioned above, sent me a message. "May I come and stay with you a few days"? Of course we said yes. She looked exhausted. "I just needed to get away from the pressures", she said, and for three days she cried and prayed with us. "But there are things I can't tell you," she said. We soon learned what she meant. The government launched a massive reconstruction of the country's educational system, and all private colleges were to reorganize under communist control--in particular the 16 Protestant and 3 Catholic colleges. A year later I was detained, given a people's trial and deported. Not long after that, we heard that there was not a single "Christian" college left.

"When we get rid of you missionaries," the communists boasted, "the Chinese church will wither away". And when I left China I was almost discouraged enough to believe them. Maybe Panikkar was right, and Christianity was about to die in Asia. There were then between three and four million Christians in China--over three million Roman Catholics and about one million Protestants, and the persecutions began shortly after we were expelled. They escalated in 1966 into ten years of the horrors of what was politely called a "cultural revolution". For one dark period in those frightening days not one church was left open in all China, except perhaps a service in one

¹⁶ Lutz, China and the Christian Colleges, 526.

of the foreign legations. I thought we had all failed, missions, missionaries and all.

But Panikkar and I were both wrong. Today, after a half century or more of the red revolution, it is the communists who are withering away--no, not withering, that would be an exaggeration-- but they are rapidly and radically changing course. Only with great difficulty are they hanging on to pure communist political power. And the Chinese Christians?. There was no withering there!. As government pressure softened in 1976 after the death of Mao Tze-Deng (or ZeDong), one visitor quoted this comment as summarizing the resilience of the persecuted Christians, "We are survivors. We were once bitten by the tiger... Its claws left scars on our faces so we are not handsome..." And another added, "We not only survived--look at us--we grew".¹⁷

That was thirty years ago. Yes, they grew and grew and grew. No one really knows how many Christians there are in China today. The government says about 15 or 20 million. But a more realistic figure, though it has to be an educated guess, is probably somewhere between 45 and 85 million people. That may be all right, but where else but in China do we accept margins of error of 40 million people. Nevertheless, even the possibility of growth from three or four million to a possible 85 million right through a revolution is not "withering away".¹⁸ It would mean that Christianity is on the verge of matching the 100 million claimed for Buddhism in China.

So what of the future in China? There are still problems, the most pressing of which is the splintering of Chinese Christianity. Protestant and Catholics are both split in two on the issue of legalized state control of religion. When the state is anti-religious and all powerful and all too fond of the death penalty, the issue becomes explosive.

¹⁷ Carl Lawrence, The Church in China, (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1985), 113, 115.

¹⁸ A "Doubly affiliated" deduction of 25 million people is checked against the listed total for Asia, (300 million). D. Barrett and T. M. Johnson, World Christian Trends, p.383.

For Protestants, a large group accepted a compromise. They called themselves the Three-Self Patriotic Movement. A smaller group resisted, and to escape persecution, went underground as independent House Churches. For Catholics, the demand for state control meant renouncing the authority of the Pope. Many refused, and were persecuted; but many also cut their ties with the Vatican and formed what was called the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association. That was fifty years ago.

This is the situation today. China's Christians are still divided. But the Catholic/Protestant balance has been completely reversed. In 1949 there were three times as many Catholics as Protestants; today there are perhaps 8 or 9 times as many Protestants as Catholics. The independent, often charismatic, non-compromising Protestant house churches have far outstripped the growth of the government-regulated Three-Self Church. And on the Catholic side it is the compromising side, the state-regulated, "pope deserting" Catholic Patriotic Association which has grown faster, at least visibly, than the persecuted, papal loyalist Roman Catholics.

Be careful before you jump to judge one side right and one side wrong in either the Protestant schism or the Catholic. Even Peter and Paul were not above arguing now and then. And both sides can quote the Bible. The Protestant "Three Self Church" chose the Biblical admonition, "Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities" (Rom. 13:1) and its churches, though severely restricted, were allowed to remain open. The "House Churches" chose a different text, "We must obey God rather than any human authority" (Acts 5:29), and for decades they refused to be governed by an atheistic regime.

The "mainline" Protestant "Three Self Church" is to be commended for preserving a visible presence for Chinese Christianity through the long years of the revolution. It was right in thinking that Christians must not be afraid of social reform. But it ran a risk--too much dependence on government, and a tendency to emphasize political social action over faithfulness to the worship and doctrines and the counsel of God in His Word. The conservative house churches which went underground, now represent the largest and fastest growing religious movement in all China. But they, too, run a risk--the lack of an educated Christian leadership, and often too little

opportunity or ability to effect wider reforms in China.

As for China's Catholics, it is quite possible that in the long run, the loyalist "Roman" Catholics, though they have been persecuted out of sight, may have the final advantage. The communist-controlled, self-ordained bishops of the Catholic Patriotic Association are not recognized outside China; but the underground loyalists have a pope known to all the world.

They may even have a "secret" cardinal. In 1979 the Pope, John-Paul II secretly (*in pectore*) appointed a Chinese cardinal for the loyalists, Bishop Gong Pin-Mei (Ignatius Kung). Bishop Kung was an authentic Roman Catholic bishop, born in a five-generation Catholic family. He was bishop of Shanghai and was thrown into prison in 1955, to "wither away" for thirty years. When he was released (but still kept in "house arrest), he did not know that for his last six years in prison he had been a "secret cardinal". It was kept a secret for another six years, and not publicly announced until 1991.¹⁹ Cardinal Kung died not long ago in America. But there is a rumor even now that another "secret cardinal" for China may soon be announced.

[I may have to skip Japan and North Korea--the two apparent failures of Christian mission in East Asia. They bring a balancing dose of hard reality into the explosive picture of church growth I have been painting in China, Korea--but let me skip to the the bright hopeful side again: South Korea.]

¹⁹ Richard C. Bush, Jr., Religion in Communist China, (Nashville and New York: Abingdon Press, 1970). 123-126, 136-139, 146-149; Catholic World News (Jan. 22, 2001, <http://www.cwnews.com/news/viewstory>. (Jan. 22, 2001), (4/4/2005); and "A Brief Biography of His Eminence Ignatius Cardinal Kung Pin-Mei (Gong)", <http://www.cardinalkungfoundation.org/biography/>

Japan: The Church that Didn't Grow

Population 127,000,000; Christians 4,560,000, or 3.6%

The story of Christianity in Japan is a wake-up, cold shower of hard history that needs to be added to the story of Christianity in Asia. It is an antidote to premature Christian triumphalism, a more subdued story sandwiched in between two brighter stories of apparent triumph (Korea and China), to remind us that Christianity is not always a success story as the world defines success. Time does not permit adequate treatment here, but let me just say that it does not lead us to much Christian boasting to learn that there were more professing Christians in Japan 350 years ago in the early 1600s, than there are today. Japan's publicly reported Christian percentage of the total population is less than 2%, compared with about 7 or 8% in China, or as high as 30% or more in South Korea.

*** In the 19th century, while the Chinese empire was crumbling, the Japanese empire was riding high, ready to conquer the world. In 1894 it had easily defeated massively larger China. A Chinese army came rolling south into Korea with drums and banners and Mongolian style Manchurian cavalry straight out of the days of Genghis Khan. But its Chinese officers were still technically being chosen on the basis of their ability with the bow and arrow--the mark of a gentleman. The Japanese, on the other hand, silent and efficient, had the most modern of guns. The great land battle of the Sino-Japanese War was fought over the Korean city of Pyongyang (now the capital of North Korea) where my father had just established residence as the first permanent Protestant missionary in the interior outside the official treaty ports. After the battle, as he walked through the battlefield and counted the Chinese bodies laid out for miles, he said he felt he was watching the end of the Middle Ages--guns against bows and arrows, umbrellas and obsolete weapons.

Ten years later, in 1905, little Japan defeated another empire, Russia, in the Russo-Japanese War. And when my father saw his first Russian prisoners in Japanese prisoner-of-war camps, he said he felt that he was watching the end of the white man's domination of Asia.

So a victorious imperial Japan, unlike defeated imperial China, met the incoming wave of 20th century Christian missionaries with an

air of assurance that felt no need to re-examine its own religious foundations and consider Christianity as a serious alternative. After all, it had just soundly defeated one of the greatest Christian empires in the world, Russia. The result was little progress of Christian missions in Japan. Another unanticipated result was that only thirty years later, in the 1930s, having annexed Korea, Japan began a crusade to conquer the whole of East Asia, beginning with Korea, China, and next, perhaps, the world.

But to conquer the world, Japan saw that it needed more than an army; it needed a motivating religious faith. And what better faith than Japanese Shintoism with its great appeal to nationalist pride and its syncretistic ties to Japanese Buddhism. So, beginning with Korea which they absorbed in 1905 after the victory over Russia, Japan began to force Christians in their empire to adjust to Japanese Shinto Shrine worship--worship of the emperor as divine. Thus, while some in China were just beginning to think they might have a Chinese Constantine, Generalissimo, Chiang Kai-Shek, Japan already had its emperor-god, Hirohito.

We know now that the Generalissimo never became a Constantine, and that Hirohito was not divine. Japan lost its crusade, but Japan is still not Christian. Its people learned to copy western technology without adopting what was then commonly called the "western" religion. But it would be far from the truth to describe Christianity in Japan as a failure. Many factors contributed to the slowness of its growth--patriotic pride, the state religion, Shinto, and its amazing economic rise, among others. (The Bible has always pointed to obsession with riches as a barrier to Christian faith).

*** I see two major differences between Korea and Japan in respect to the impact of Christianity on those two countries. One was the soil on which the seed of the gospel was planted. Korea was a shattered nation. Its traditional religions had failed her. She was ready to listen to a religion of hope. Japan felt it already had in itself all the hope it needed. And the harvest in that difficult soil was not plenteous. But the Christians it did produce were outstanding--Kagawa, Kitamori, Uchimura. And it sent out cross-cultural missionaries across the world in the 20th century farther than its military empire at its widest extent ever was able to reach.

The second difference, in the 20th century, was a blend of theological and methodological traits in mission policies that differed markedly in Japan from those in Korea. Here I will be referring to Protestant missions, not Catholic. In Japan after World War II, the theology of the mainline missions gradually became more liberal and less evangelical than in Korea (if I may use those labels loosely). The Japan missions had earlier strongly stressed the need for independence and evangelistic outreach in their emerging churches, but in pursuit of these worthy goals, the foreign missionaries found themselves gradually separating from active congregational church life and concentrating their attention more on issues of education and social action than on outright evangelism and proclamation. They became closer to the elite and educated than to the people in the pews. It strengthened leadership but narrowed growth.

KOREA: A Success Story, but with Problems.

[Population (South) 47,000,000; Christians 19,800,000 = 40%]

It is hard for Protestant Christian observers not to be triumphalist in describing South Korea. A recent visitor returned not long ago from that country almost in shock. Methodism, he said, began in England with John Wesley, but the largest Methodist congregation in the world is not in England. It is in Seoul, Korea. Presbyterianism began in Geneva with John Calvin, but the largest Presbyterian congregation in the world is not in Geneva. It is in Seoul, Korea. Pentecostalism as a modern movement began in Southern California, but the largest Pentecostal congregation in the world is not in Southern California. It is in Seoul, Korea.

We don't have to go to Korea to sound triumphant about Korean Christianity. Here in America, mainline Protestantism is secularizing and declining all around us--Presbyterians have been losing members at the rate of 40,000 a year for thirty years. But right here in Princeton, put the point of a draftsman's compass in the middle of town, at Mercer and Nassau, and draw a circle with a 70-mile radius around where you are standing, and you will find 700 Korean-American churches within that circle. That is nearly 700 new churches which were not here 40 years ago.

What happened in Korea to produce such an explosion, spreading now not just in Korea, but around the world? The growth is obvious. Korean Protestants grew faster than Catholics; and Presbyterians grew faster than Methodists, Pentecostals and Baptists combined. When my father went to Korea 105 years ago, just six years after the first resident Protestant missionary arrived, there were less than 250 Protestant Christians in all Korea, north and south, and only two little Protestant congregations; one Presbyterian and two Methodist. Those 250, north and south, in 1890, grew to nearly 12,000,000 Protestants in the south alone today, not counting 2½ million Catholics, and a half million "marginal sects", like the Unification Church. (Operation World, '95)

More significant for the future of Christianity in Asia, those 12 million Protestants have 12,000 missionaries they have sent out around the world, and most significantly to the secularizing west,

which once so recently sent missionaries to them. Their missionaries, I might add, are often making the same mistakes we did, but there is no stopping their enthusiasm for proclaiming Jesus Christ as Saviour of the World.

But what was it that made them grow? The best answer I know was given by my father sixty years ago. To an inquiring committee from America, he simply said, "For the last fifty years we lifted up to this people the Word of God, and the Holy Spirit did the rest." Too simple, maybe, but I sincerely believe that if Christians don't begin there, they usually don't begin at all.

However, there are other important reasons why the Korean church grew.

1. I would mention, first, a non-theological reason. Christian missions to Korea came in with no imperialist, colonial baggage. It was an Asian colonialism (Japanese) which Korea resented, not the west. The American missionaries came as friends, not exploiters.

2. A second non-theological reason is that the Protestants came at a time when Korea's religious and cultural heritage was crumbling. A 500-year-old Korean dynasty was tottering to its end. Confucianism, Buddhism and Shamanism had all failed them when the country was conquered by Japan. The apparent failure of their old traditions opened the way for them to look for hope to the new, enthusiastic faith brought by their friends, the missionaries.

3. But just as important, and probably even more immediately effective, was a third reason: the wise mission policy of those early missionaries. It is called the Nevius Method, named for an 1850 graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary, John Nevius, who went to China and reacted against the old methods of mission work there. We missionaries, he said, kept control of the Chinese church in missionary hands too long. His advice was, "Trust the Holy Spirit, and trust the converts the Spirit gives you. Let them evangelize their own country and build up a Chinese church".

His policy was not adopted by the Presbyterian missions in China, but in 1890 when Nevius brought the same message to a little

band of pioneer missionaries in Korea, they listened, and it became a catalytic turning point in the subsequent history of Korean Christianity. The Presbyterian mission adopted the "Nevius Method" as its official policy. It is no coincidence that although Catholic missions began a hundred years earlier, and Methodists at the same time as the Presbyterians, there are now twice as many Korean Presbyterians as Catholics, and five times as many Presbyterians as Methodists.

The Nevius Method is known today as the "Three-Self Method".²⁰ The first "self" is self-government, that is, turn over the church to Korean control as soon as there is a Korean ordained ministry and eldership to lead it. That was done in 1907, the year the first class graduated from the first Korean seminary. The second "self" was self-support. That was done even earlier, in the 1890s. The mission decided not to pay the salaries of Korean pastors or build Korean churches with foreign money. Instead, in faith, they entrusted the full responsibilities of Christian stewardship to their converts. Koreans have been "tithers" ever since. The third "self" is self-propagation, that is lay evangelism. But that deserves to be another point by itself. I call it "the Korean Initiative.

4. So the fourth reason is the Korean initiative. Evangelism was emphasized as the responsibility of all Christians, not just Korean pastors and foreign missionaries. And oh how enthusiastically Koreans can evangelize. [Watermelon?] Korean Protestantism began not with foreign missionaries in Korea, but with a Korean lay evangelist, Suh Sang-Yoon, even before the first missionaries arrived. He was converted in Manchuria by Scottish missionaries in 1876. He came back to Korea in 1883 and formed a little Christian community in his home village a whole year before the first American missionaries landed-- Horace Allen, a Presbyterian doctor (1884), Horace Underwood a Presbyterian minister, and Henry G. Appenzeller, a Methodist minister (1884. But the Korean layman, Suh Sang-Yun, was first. As one missionary remarked in admiration years ago, "the Korean Christians have always been one step ahead of the missionaries".

²⁰ The Nevius Method also has roots in the "three-self" mission strategies advocated by Henry Venn in England and Rufus Anderson in America.

5. A fifth reason for growth was prayer. A distinctive feature of Korean church life is the day-break prayer meeting. It takes spiritual discipline to get up at 4 or 5 in the morning for spiritual exercise, not physical exercise. One Presbyterian church in Seoul has four day-break prayer meetings for its congregation: at 4, 5, 6 and 7 every weekday morning. The 6 and 7 o'clock meetings each draw an attendance of 5,000 people. I'm not surprised that his Presbyterian congregation has 70,000 members--that's three times the size of our whole New Brunswick presbytery.

6. A sixth reason was Bible Study. The early missionaries translated the Bible into common, vernacular Korean using the Korean alphabet so that everyone could read it. They didn't use the difficult Chinese characters which were taught only to sons of the elite by Confucian scholars. One of the requirements quickly established for full communicant membership in the church in those pioneer days was learning to read. "How can you be a Christian if you can't read the Bible?", they said. That may explain why Korea today has a higher rate of literacy than the United States.

*** 7. And seventh, revival. The Presbyterian church in Korea was organized in the midst of a spiritual revival, explosive and spectacular, that swept through the peninsula from 1903 to 1907. It touched off massive ingatherings of church growth. It permanently stamped the church's character with a revivalistic fervor that has been compared with the revivals of John Wesley. Though the principal benefactors of the revival were the Presbyterians, it was ecumenical. The Koreans said to the missionaries, "Some of you go back to John Calvin, and some of you to John Wesley, but we can go back no further than 1907 when we first really knew the Lord Jesus Christ".²¹ ***

8. An eighth reason for growth was Korean Christianity's refusal to polarize evangelism and social action. It practiced both, because to Korean Christians both were gospel, good news. The early missionaries were anything but spiritually other-worldly. The first missionary, Dr. Allen, opened Korea's first modern hospital and then moved from the mission into diplomacy to become an early American

²¹ Moffett, Christians of Korea, 53 f.

Minister (ambassador). No national problem or concern was considered out of bounds for Christian care and concern. The pioneers gave Korea its first schools for women, its first schools for the blind. Underwood imported kerosene and agricultural implements, and naturally a little later, his brother's new product, the Underwood typewriter. Moffett opened a timber concession on the Yalu River, managed by Christian Koreans. Foreign traders objected. That wasn't missionary business, they said; it was infringing on the trader's profits. The missionaries replied, "We are not doing it for ourselves; we are teaching our converts modern techniques and business methods so they will be able to compete on a more equal footing with Western traders as the West sweeps in on them". Besides, they said, "No national problem or concern is out of bounds for Christian care and attention." It is no coincidence that the Republic of Korea's first president after independence from Japan was a Christian, a Methodist; and of the last two retired presidents, one is a Presbyterian elder, and the other a Roman Catholic, with a Methodist wife.

But I must not let myself be carried away with beating the success drums for Korean church growth. It speaks for itself There is one reason for church growth that I don't brag about. It is church schism. One of the least pleasant facts of Korean church history is that one way the Korean church grows is by splitting. Where else in the world will you find a Jesus Presbyterian Church and a Christ Presbyterian Church and Jesus isn't speaking to Christ. But by the grace of God, when a Korean Presbyterian church splits, in ten years each half seems to grow to be as large as the whole was before the split.

My time has run out. Let me close with Seven Lessons we can learn from the history of the church in Asia, beginning with this thesis: the future of Christianity in the 21st century will be largely shaped by the rise of the third world churches. But...

1. Christians will lose if they depend too long on political power, whether national or foreign.

2. They will lose if they fail to be identified with, and appreciate, their own national cultural heritage; and also if they fail to bear a counter-cultural witness within that heritage.

3. They will lose if their enthusiasm for evangelism wanes and they do not share the Good News of Jesus Christ.

4. They will lose if they do not validate their spiritual message with social compassion and integrity.

5. They will lose if they fail to produce educated leadership for the nation and the church.

6. They will also lose, however, if they concentrate on social programs to the neglect of the personal and corporate disciplines and responsibilities of the Christian life within the congregation..

7. And finally, Christians will lose everything if they abandon their theological center: One God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and one Saviour, Jesus Christ; and one definitive, inspired rule of faith and practice, the Scriptures.

Samuel Hugh Moffett
Princeton, April 21, 2005

